

Sir, that as long as the present system of competition continues, the most strenuous efforts to improve architectural science will be baffled, and that for the simple reason, that there is no competent tribunal to whom is committed the most difficult and arduous task of deciding on comparative merit. At present, indeed, there is no security that merit will be regarded at all, for the committees who for the most part sit in judgment on competition plans, have no notion of merit themselves. Architectural societies may judge fairly of the abstract merit and correctness of any plan, but I think their utility would be impaired if they were made use of for deciding on comparative merit. What is wanted, therefore, is some tribunal so notoriously competent that all the profession would bow to it, to whom all competition plans should be submitted; and until some such scheme is devised, I fear that architects will experience far more evil than good from the system of competition."

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

THE bronze casting of the Rutland Statue for Leicester, by Mr. Davis, has been completed, it is said, successfully. The erection, however, according to the local Journal, will be delayed, as the new market-house is not yet finished; meantime the cast will appear at the International Exhibition.—A new organ, built by Groves and Mitchell, of London, has been built in St. Paul's Church, Cambridge, and was opened on Sunday before last. The *Cambridge Chronicle* speaks highly of its performance.—A plan for a proposed public park at Houndwell, Southampton, was lately submitted to the council by Mr. Guillaume, and there appears to be every prospect of the project being carried out.—A poor man was suffocated, in the course of last week, in the stove vault of St. Mary's Church, Basingstoke. He had been two years in attendance on the hot-air apparatus for warming the church, and went as usual on the Saturday night to light the fire, when he appears to have been suffocated by an accumulation of carbonic acid gas—prevented, doubtless, from diffusing itself by want of proper ventilation. In vaults, above all places, the utmost precaution is requisite in the use of stoves.—It is said that the restoration works at Wells Cathedral, which have been for some time past in abeyance, will be resumed forthwith, the dean and other dignitaries of the church having provided the necessary funds.—An organ has been purchased for use in the palace chapel of the Wells Theological College. Mr. W. Sweetland, of Bath, was the builder.—The Government is about to give assistance to the establishment of a Government School of Design at Stourbridge. One hundred pounds a year is to be given, besides art-examples, school furniture, &c., if suitable rooms are provided.—A "Stourbridge, Brimley-hill, and Kingswinford Waterworks Company" is about to be established by joint-stock shares, and an Act of Parliament applied for. Plans have been prepared by Mr. G. Bate, C.E. The water is to be conveyed from the Cleat hills, and will rise of its own accord to the tops of the houses throughout the district to be supplied.—More than 550*l.* have been collected for a monument in Hereford Cathedral in honour of the late Mr. Joseph Bailey, jun., M.P.—A new police station has been built at West Bromwich; Mr. E. Harland, contractor; Mr. Smith, of Stafford, architect.—About 300*l.* have been subscribed by the working classes of Macclesfield, almost in separate pence, towards the establishment of a public park and free library there. A machine maker, Mr. Frost, has offered to provide palisading for the park, and do any kind of iron-work necessary in carrying out the undertaking, free of charge.—The house at Preston where Richard Arkwright, the barber, neglected his decent business, and allowed it to go all to sticks, notwithstanding the strenuous endeavours of his industrious and admirable wife to prevent him meddling with "stuff and nonsense" that he, the barber, had nothing to do with, has lately been destroyed, we are sorry to hear, in the progress of alterations for a new north entrance into the town.—The Dumfries Burns Club are soliciting subscriptions for the restoration and completion of the Burns Mausoleum, and the

protection of the sculpture which it contains from further dilapidation. The plan of the monument was never completed.—The suspension-bridge over the river Oich, at the east end of Loch Oich, and the summit level of the Caledonian canal, has just been completed, and is now open for traffic. It has a span of 145 feet 6 inches. The pillars upon which the chains rest are 34 feet above the low-water level, and built of rock masonry. Within the last thirty years two timber bridges and a substantial granite stone bridge have been destroyed by the mountain torrents. The present erection is on Dredge's principle. Twenty tons of cast-iron were used in its construction, and its cost is said to be less than that of a rough wooden bridge. The Caledonian Canal, by the way, is now getting into great use for vessels crossing Scotland through its lakes and cuts, in place of sailing round by the Orkneys.

LANDLORD AND TENANT.

DISTRAINING MACHINES.

In the case "*Elwell v. Eastwood*," tried in the Court of Exchequer, the question which the Court had taken time to consider was, whether certain spinning machines, some of which were screwed into the floor and others into lead, let into stone, were distrainable for the rent of the mill in which they were used. The Court considered it plain that before they were fixed they were in their nature distrainable. The question, therefore, was, whether they lost that character by being fixed in the manner mentioned. At common law, things fixed to the freehold, or directly connected with it, as keys or windows, and also those things which could not be returned in the same condition as that in which they were taken, were not distrainable. It was plain that these machines might be brought back without any damage to themselves: the fact that they must be taken to pieces was immaterial—four-post bedsteads and similar articles of furniture cannot be removed bodily, but they are not the less liable to distress, nor does it make any difference that expense would be incurred in putting them together again. The only question that remained was, whether these things were part of the freehold. This must depend on two considerations: first, the mode; second, the purpose of the annexation. In neither of these respects were these machines part of the freehold; they were not attached *perpetui ansu rebus*, they could be removed without injury to the building. They were only fixed for the purpose of steadying them, and could no more be considered fixtures than carpets which are fixed to the floor with nails, or looking-glasses, or any other ornamental articles which are usually slightly attached to the building. For these reasons the Court was of opinion that the machines in question were liable to be taken as a distress.

DOINGS NEAR HEREFORD.

BUILDERS AND BOARDS OF GUARDIANS.

THE following may possibly serve to instruct your readers. At a county town not one hundred miles from Hereford, where some money was left about the close of the last century by a charitable individual for the benefit of the place, after fifty years of misappropriation, compunction of conscience, or rather fear of Chancery proceedings, induced the trustees, in the eleventh hour, to appropriate what was left to the object originally devised by the testator; and, in pursuance of these intentions, to erect schools for 600 children, with residences for master and mistress. After the preliminary arrangements of selecting an architect from the various candidates who offered, deciding upon what sort of plans they should adopt, tenders were at length advertised for, and on the day fixed opened; when, as is often the case, there was great discrepancy, the highest being 2,600*l.*, the lowest 1,300*l.* (The interest and excitement of these matters consists in opening one tender double the amount you have to expend, with the prospect of obtaining another so low as to leave a large balance in hand.) Soon, however, it was discovered that the lucky contractor had omitted a figure at the wrong end of his cast, and was, consequently, 1,000*l.* gross under his own calculations in detail. He, accordingly, refused to sign; was threatened with legal proceedings; but, for the payment of a few guineas, to be applied to charitable purposes, was let off. The committee were thrown on their hack, and consulted their architect as to the next move on the board; the following *rase* was the consequence. They

advertised for tenders with the rather amusing stipulation that they must not exceed 1,500*l.* Again the juggle of opening tenders is gone through, when the lowest comes up to 1,670*l.*, the others varying above 2,000*l.* With this reduced estimate the building will be executed at 1*l.* 4*d.* per foot, or one-third the price of a pauper lunatic asylum or workhouse, with a facade of late Tudor decoration of the genuine *Pascarus-cum-Bloomsbury* description.

The first part of this account will instruct your readers how tenders are calculated utterly at variance with the common rules of arithmetic; and the last will suggest to committees and to architects a mode, at once simple and ingenious, of escaping themselves out of the mire by wiping their boots on the backs of the builders.

OLD HICKORY.

THE ART-UNION OF LONDON.

THIS society have issued, as usual, their sheet almanac, and the same in pocket form, which may be obtained gratuitously by every subscriber. It contains much useful information, and shows, amongst other striking facts, that more than 135,000*l.* have been subscribed by the society for the benefit of art and artists.

We have received an early impression from a plate of "*The Villa of Lucullus*," engraved by Mr. J. T. Willmore, A.E.R.A., in his best manner, for the Art-Union of London, with an intimation that these prints are now being delivered to the subscribers of the current year. The engraving is one of the best produced by the society, and a very effective translation of the fine picture by Mr. W. L. Lanch, which our readers may remember in the Academy Exhibition of 1844. A new feature has this year been introduced by the council, that of giving each subscriber the choice between two prints. The alternative print with the one above named is "*The Burial of Harold*," by Mr. F. Bacon, after the original picture by Mr. F. R. Peckersgill, A.R.A., which gained one of the premiums of 500*l.* given by the Royal Commission in 1847. The delivery of this print has been delayed, with a view to the introduction of certain effects, decided upon by the council on consultation with the painter and engraver, which will add greatly to the artistic value of the production.

The council, in continuation of their efforts to carry out the principle constantly advocated in their reports, of bringing high art to the aid of our manufactures, have commissioned the production of a tazza in fine cast iron. The form selected is one of the most graceful in the Etruscan room in the British Museum, and it is intended to ornament the interior of the bowl with figures in low relief, which have been very successfully modelled by Mr. E. Wyon, after a design from a vase in Sir Wm. Hamilton's collection, representing Hercules and the Hesperides.

A certain number of the tazzas will be given as prizes in the distribution of the current year.

DECORATION OF THE BUILDING IN HYDE PARK.—Will you allow me to inform "*Suum Cuique*," who assumes that I have taken, without acknowledgment, from Mr. Gilbert French's "*Hints for the Arrangement of Colours*," printed in your journal of the 11th of August, 1849—the opinions expressed by me at the meeting of the Royal Institute of British Architects on December 16th, that these opinions were formed by me in Egypt and the East generally, twenty years ago; that they have been my constant guide in practice ever since; that I printed them partially nine years ago, and delivered them in a lecture at the Royal Institution seven years ago, very much in the same words I used at the Institute on December 16th. How far my views may coincide with Mr. Gilbert French's "*Hints for the Arrangement of Colours*," I cannot say, as I have but a very imperfect recollection of his paper: I read it in your journal when it appeared, but have no copy of it. One thing is certain, that I can owe nothing to Mr. Gilbert French, and if "*Suum Cuique*" will make himself known to me, I will furnish him with abundant proofs of what I advance.—OWEN JONES.